

## WOODSGATE FARM

Copyhold of the Manor of Bexhill

### PROPERTY DETAILS (NGR TQ 7348 0869)

Woodsgate grew from 16 acres to over 160 acres as it eventually encompassed the Honeys estate and probably also Newlands.

The main house is a very imposing building of the middle 19th century and joining this to the west is the 18th century farmhouse.

When the new house was built there was a gap between that and the old house. The new house was extended to join the old house and this can be seen on the O.S. Map of 1910. This old house came to be known as Russells Cottage after a gardener who worked there when Larkin Brothers the Builders had this as their headquarters and this old farmhouse was used as a store. The bonding of the brickwork of the old house is three rows stretchers and one row headers. This house was originally longer, it has at sometime been shortened at the southern end probably when the main house was extended. This end is now rendered in cement and the end of the side wall is lacking closures which indicates a corner.

A barn type of building shown on the 1873 Map lying alongside the roadway and in front of the old house was still extant in 1988 but with additional doors. This building has a flint base similar to an old piece of walling near the garages. These garages are situated where the farm buildings stood. These old buildings have gone except for the rear part of Link Cottage which has a double pitch roof. The front of this cottage is cavity wall. The rear part maybe the original building but this looks blackened as if there had been a fire there at one time. This would account for the modern brickwork at the front as repair work. The Lodge in Gunters Lane was built c1900 where the milkmaids lived. There was a swiss chalet type of building near the old farmhouse which was used as a school for farmworkers children. This was destroyed by a falling tree in the hurricane of 1987. (1)

The following is the work done by Margaret Cullingworth on John Lambert Walker who owned Woodsgate. This is from an email she sent to me.

I had it in mind that I needed to know more about the club he built in Holliers Hill as it's often been said that Sidley Working men's Club eventually "moved back to its original premises there", but things I have found recently suggest that in its early days it was running at the same time as John Lambert Walker's original club, which incidentally was called "The Bexhill Club (Temperance in All Things)." After that folded, part of the premises was called "The Sidley Reading Room." I knew it had been in a tin hut in Sidley previously. Well I knew Mr Walker did a series of talks at the Reading Rooms in 1891 on the theme of "Reminiscences of a Self Made Man"

but had not got around to looking at them in the Bexhill Chronicles. All I had were some extracts that Phyllis Burl wrote out. I have photocopies of a couple of pages of what she wrote. I now find they were VERY much truncated

### **Bexhill Chronicle 3 March 1893**

**MR. J. LAMBERT WALKER** who has of late years been a temporary occupant, on and off, of his house in Sidley, will, we hear, again take up permanent residence at Woodsgate House, Woodsgate Park, after Lady day, when Lady Maidstone's term of occupancy expires. The spot upon which Woodsgate House stands is among the few which still remain and bear evidence of the rural charms associated with old Bexhill. To newcomers and visitors the house - embedded as it is in a cluster of trees with the South aspect, overlooking the Channel, alone visible from the Downs - invariably forms an object of attraction which is by no means surprising, as the residence bears an unmistakeable impression of rustic calm and cosy comfort which may well be coveted by many.

**His house at Sidley** of which he had been a temporary occupant, on and off, was no doubt **Auckland Villa**, as he is listed there three years running in street directories.

Among things I printed out from the film of 1891 Bexhill Chronicles was a piece headed "THE INMATES OF BATTLE UNION AT WOODGATE, BEXHILL". I did not notice it until I got home and studied the print-out as I printed it due to something else on the same page, but it starts "Yesterday some sixty or seventy inmates of the Battle Union Workhouse were generously entertained by **Viscountess Maidstone**, at her charming residence, Woodgate, Bexhill.

Unfortunately it starts at the bottom of a column so that is the only bit of it that printed.

**So - this tells us she was a Viscountess**

So I've just done an Internet search for **Viscount Maidstone** and found this:

**George William Heneage Finch-Hatton, Viscount Maidstone** was born on 26 December 1852. He was the son of George James Finch, 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of Winchilsea [sic] and Lady Constance Henrietta Paget. **He married Louisa Augusta Jenkinson**, daughter of Sir George Samuel Jenkinson, 11<sup>th</sup> Bt., and Emily Sophia Lyster, on 28 December 1876. He died on 3 February 1879 at age 26.

George William Heneage Finch-Hatton, Viscount Maidstone was styled as *Viscount Maidstone*

**She was evidently known as 'Augusta', and her sister with her, surname Jenkinson, confirms the above piece (Maybe they had been living in France and brought their servants with them from there!)**

**Here's the 1891 census for Woodsgate House**

142	Woodsgate Ho	1		Augusta	Maidstone	Head	Wid	35	Living on Own Means			Cork
				Emie?	Jenkinson	Sister	S	37	Living on Own Means			Wales
				Sophie	Clarke	Serv	Wid	34	Cook Domestic			Oxford
				Mumie?	Paine	Serv	S	25	Ladies Maid			Sussex
				Authinuse?	Habourner?	Serv	S	20?	Parlour Maid			France, Pas du Calais
				Estelle	Habourner?	Serv	S	15	Kitchen Maid			France, Pas du Calais

### Here's Mr Walker's Farm Bailiff: in 1891

142	Woodsgate	1		Charles	Savage	Head	M	61	Farm Bailiff	X		SSX Bexhill
				Harriett	Savage	Wife	M	53				SSX Bexhill
				Ernest	Savage	Son	S	25	Farm Labourer	X		SSX Bexhill
				Constance	Savage	Daur	S	17	Mothers help			SSX Bexhill
				Harold	Savage	Son		13	Gardeners Assistant	X		SSX Bexhill

At Woodsgate Lodge was Joseph Shoemsmith and family. He was a gardener

And here's the Walker family in London at that time

(Jill Walker sent me this before she knew he was not her husband's ancestor!)

### 1891 census

#### WALKERS living at The Glebe, Oak Lawn, Lee, Lewisham

JOHN L	H	M	70	Gum Merchant	Islington
SUSAN	W	M	60		Lewes
MARION	D	U	41		Stepney
MARGARET	D	U	40		Stepney
EMILY	D	U	35		Dalston
ANN	D	U	29		Tottenham
LAMBERT	S	U	23	Gum Merchant Assist.	Clapton
SUSIE	D	U	20		Clapton

EDITH GREAVES niece 26

born London

3 servants

### OWNER/TENANT DETAILS

<1567> Richard Burckham tent barn and 16 acres (2)  
 <1620> Wenham (12)  
 <1640> Simon Wakeham (12)  
 <1673> Joseph Wakeham Messuage barn and lands (3)  
 Henry Gouldsmith married Hannah Wakeham  
 ?? Joseph Gouldsmith (12)  
 <1727-1737> John Brett (4)

<1740>	John Taylor tenant paying Poor Rate (5)
<1754>	John Stubberfield paying Poor Rate (5)
<1800	John Lansdell
1800 Dec 21	Thomas Selmes of Battle, Yeoman, on surrender of John Lansdell, Messuage, barn, buildings and 120 acres (6)
c1808	John Lansdell as Down Farm 132 acres (7)
1818	John Lansdell sold for £1900 (12)
1818	new grant to Thomas Larkin
<1823>	Thomas Larkin Messuage and buildings & 129 acres (8)
<1837>	Thomas Larkin Downgate and Honeys (9)
<1843>	Thomas Larkin owner/occupier as Woodsgate 160 acres (10)
1846 Dec 1	Thomas Larkin sold (13)
1846-1868	Rev Thomas Wheeler Gillham (14) shown in P.O. Directory as resident
<1874>	John Lambert Walker (12) in 1895 Directory
1889-1893	Lady Maidstone, occupier, property called Woodsgate until 1890, Woodsgate House 1891-1904+ (16)
1894-1903	John Lambert Walker, owner occupier (16)
1904	vacant (16)
<1906-1906	Rev R J Martin MA, school for boys called 'St Leonards School' (16)
1907-1913	reverts to Woodsgate House, vacant (16)
1914-1917+	R More, renamed Woodsgate Place (16)
1919/1920	John Lambert Walker owner/occupier (11)
c1923-1927+	Lord Joicey D.L. J.P. Woodsgate Place; Ford Castle Berwick upon Tweed & 58 Cadogan Square S.W.1 & Reform, National Liberal Bath, Hurlingham & Northern Counties Clubs, London (15, 16)
??	Harris agents bought and sold to:
1933 August-1980+	R.A. Larkin (12, 16)

## SOURCES

- 1 Personal visit
- 2 Kent County Archives KAO U269 M20 Bexhill Manor Rental
- 3 ESRO RAF BOX Manor Rental
- 4 ESRO AMS 5641/2 Rev Ott Tithe Book
- 5 ESRO DR/B33/1 Poor Rate
- 6 ESRO ADA 65 p66
- 7 ESRO AMS 5819 Duke of Dorset's Survey
- 8 Bexhill Museum Manor Rental
- 9 ESRO Hastings Polling District Book on shelf
- 10 ESRO TD/E 141 Tithe Award
- 11 ESRO Land Tax & ESRO ADA 68
- 12 To be checked

- 13 ESRO ADA 68
- 14 ESRO ADA 69
- 15 ESRO Kelly's 1927
- 16 Bexhill street directories